

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

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TAGS: PINS, ASEC, AR

SUBJECT: ARMY OFFICERS ASSASSINATED

REF BA 6058

1. SUMMARY. ROBERTO MARIO SANTUCHO, HEAD OF THE ERP, GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE IN BUENOS AIRES ON SEP 18 PROMISING TO INDISCRIMINATELY KILL ONE ARMY OFFICER FOR EACH OF THE ERP GUERRILLAS KILLED IN CATAMARCA ON AUG 12 (SEE REFTEL. THE ERP HAS BEGUN TO CARRY OUT ITS THREAT AND HAS KILLED TWO OFFICERS AND MADE TWO OTHER ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS WHICH FAILED. END SUMMARY

2. IN A PRESS CONFERENCE GIVEN IN BUENOS AIRES ON SEP 18 WITH HALF A DOZEN JOURNALISTS, ROBERTO MARIO SANTUCHO, A TOP LEADER OF THE PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY ARMY (ERP), STATED THAT MILITARY OFFICERS WOULD BE INDISCRIMINATELY KILLED IN RETRIBUTION FOR THE ERP GUERRILLAS WHOM SNATUCHO CLAIMED WERE EXECUTED BY THE ARMY AFTER THE ABORTIVE ATTACK ON A MILITARY INSTALLATION IN CATAMARCA ON AUG 12. ONE NEWS SOURCE INDICATED THAT SANTUCHO HAD INDICATED ONLY 14 OFFICERS WOULD BE KILLED, RATHER THAN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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16 REFERRED TO IN THE COMMUNIQUE HANDED OUT, BUT THIS IS NOT

CONFIRMED BY OTHER SOURCES.

COMMENT. RELIABLE DAO SOURCES WHO WERE PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN ACTION AGAINST GUERRILLAS MAINTAIN THE 16 WERE ALL KILLED IN BATTLE WITH ARMY AFTER THEY TRIED TO STAND AND FIGHT. THE OTHER GUERRILLAS SHED THEIR UNIFORMS AND WEAPONS AND ATTEMPTED TO LEAVE THE SCENE AFTER THE ATTACK FAILED.

3. SANTUCHO ALSO STATED THAT THE ERP WAS STRONGER THAN EVER AND READY TO WAGE A PROTRACTED WAR AGAINST SECURITY FORCES. WHEN ASKED IF THE ERP WAS OPERATING WITH THE MONTONEROS, SANTUCHO SAID HIS ORGANIZATION HAD NOT YET BEEN CONTACTED BY THEM.

4. THE ERP HAS ALREADY BEGUN TO MAKE GOOD ON ITS THREAT. ON SEP 26 IN CORDOBA COL JORGE GRASSI, A III CORPS STAFF ENGINEER OFFICER, WAS ASSASSINATED AS HE LEFT HIS HOUSE FOR WORK. IN ROSARIO ON THE SAME DAY LT LUIS BRITZ WAS KILLED AS HE WAS DRIVING HIS CAR. TWO OTHER ATTEMPTS, ONE AGAINST A LTCOL IN CORDOBA AND ANOTHER AGAINST A MAN WHO WAS MISTAKEN FOR AN OFFICER, RESULTED IN THE VICTIMS BEING WOUNDED BUT NOT KILLED.

5. IN REACTION THE GOA HAS SENT A BILL TO CONGRESS STIFFENING THE PENALTIES FOR TERRORIST ACTS. THE BILL WILL BE DEBATED SEP 26 (SEE SEPTEL).

6. WITH REGARD TO RIGHT WING TERRORISM, THE AAA (ARGENTINE ANTICOMMUNIST ALLIANCE), WHICH HAS COME INTO PROMINENCE WITH ITS RECENT THREATS AGAINST CONGRESSMEN AND PUBLICATION OF A LIST OF PAST AND FUTURE VICTIMS, HAS ISSUED ANOTHER SERIES OF COMMUNIQUES. IN THEM THE AAA TOOK CREDIT FOR THE BOMBING OF EXUNIVERSITY RECTOR RAUL LAGUZZI'S APARTMENT WHICH RESULTED IN THE DEATH OF HIS 4 MONTH OLD SON. THEY ALSO LENGTHENED THE LIST OF INTENDED VICTIMS BY ADDING LABOR LEADER AGUSTIN TOSCO, FOLK SINGERS HORACIO GUARANY AND MERCEDES SOSA AND ACTRESS NACHA GUEVARA. RODOLFO PUIGGROS, ANOTHER POTENTIAL AAA VICTIM, LEFT THE COUNTRY ON SEP 25 AFTER BEING GRANTED ASYLUM IN MEXICO (BA 7158).

7. COMMENT. WHILE ARMY INSTALLATIONS HAVE LONG BEEN PROSPECTIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ERP TARGETS, THE INDISCRIMINATE ASSASSINATION OF OFFICERS ADDS A NEW DIMENSION TO ARGENTINE TERRORISM AND WILL ALSO ADD PRESSURE ON THE GOA FROM THE ARMY TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. INDEED, MRS PERON RECOGNIZED THIS IN HER SPEECH TO NATION TODAY (SEP 26) IN WHICH SHE CONDEMNED TERRORISTS ACTS. TERRORISTS, SHE SAID, WERE TRYING TO RPROVOKE MILITARY SECTOR TO RASH ACT WHICH WOULD INTERRUPT CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS. BUT MILITARY WAS NOT FOOLED AND WOULD STAND FULLY BEHIND GOVERNMENT, SHE CONCLUDED. ARMY C-IN-C ANAYA

ENUNCIATED ASSURANCES TO LATTER EFFECT IN SPEECH TODAY AT
FUNERAL OF COL GRASSI IN CORDOBA.
HILL

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